



The Rhode Island Rivers Council  
c/o RI Water Resources Board  
235 Promenade Street, Suite 394  
Providence, RI 02908  
www.ririvers.org



Minutes of May 14, 2014 Meeting - 4pm  
RI Department of Administration  
William Powers Building - One Capitol Hill  
Conference Room B  
Providence, RI 02908

#### ATTENDANCE:

A. **Members Present:**

Veronica Berounsky, Chair  
Rachel Calabro, Vice Chair  
James Cole  
Walter Galloway  
Judith Hadley  
Chuck Horbert  
Guy Lefebvre  
Lisa McGreavy, Secretary  
Elise Torello

B. **Guests in Attendance:**

Nancy Hess, RI Statewide Planning  
Sue Kiernan, RIDEM  
Frank O'Connell, Georgiaville Pond Association

1. **Call to Order:** Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:07 pm.

2. **Review and approval of April 9, 2014 meeting minutes:** Mr. Lefebvre moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Galloway seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Speaker Series:** Nancy Hess, RI Statewide Planning & Sue Kiernan, RIDEM: "The Rhode Island State Guide Plan"

As a way of providing a background for today's speaker series and developing the council's "story", Mr. Lefebvre distributed a timeline outlining the progression of the RIRC beginning in 1990 with the *Lieutenant Governor's Task Force on Rivers*. The RIRC recognized early on that citizens' care of water bodies originates in outdoor recreation experiences more than technical aspects of water contamination.

Ms. Hess and Ms. Kiernan provided an informative presentation outlining the state's water quality management planning process and the purpose of the State Guide Plan that is being

updated to integrate prior plans into a single State Guide Plan. The update is necessary to eliminate redundancy among various policies and plans in order to more effectively advance the state's water quality goals. A handout outlined the state's water quality status noting that the following percentages are currently not meeting water quality standards: 38.8% of 1,420 river miles, 41% of 20,749 total lake acres, and 35% of 159 square miles of estuarine waters. There are five major issues contributing to the problem including:

- Nutrient enrichment;
- Pathogens;
- Stormwater management;
- Local capacity to implement needed water quality actions; and
- Sustainable financing to meet wastewater and stormwater infrastructure needs.

One approach to address the issues is to utilize a watershed framework that would aim to:

- Define roles of governmental, non-governmental and private sector in watershed protection and restoration;
- Divide RI into 26 watershed planning areas;
- Work with existing watershed councils;
- Develop watershed-based plans with a 5-year outlook; and
- Encourage greater alignment of resources to optimize results and demonstrate progress toward water quality goals.

Ms. Kiernan distributed a map entitled *DEM Watershed Planning Areas* depicting 26 watersheds in the state. It is RIDEM's goal is to work closely with watershed groups to develop a plan for each watershed in the state that would identify strategies to address issues specific to each watershed. Issues of concern will differ across watersheds: rural watersheds may be more concerned with protecting water quality while urban watersheds may be more concerned with restoring water quality.

Ms. Hess and the subcommittee working to update the Water Quality Management Plan Element of the State Guide Plan met with representatives of the Rivers Council in February 2014 to insure that the element update adequately represents the policies and objectives of the Rivers Council. The RIRC *Rivers Policy and Classification Plan* will be included in an appendix to the element update.

#### 4. **Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:**

- Narragansett Bay Estuary Program - Walter Galloway:**  
Mr. Galloway reported that a Request for Proposals has been issued for the fiscal year 2014 \$2 million federal funding initiative for coastal watershed restoration.
- State Guide Plan Advisory Committee - Rachel Calabro:**  
Nancy Hess of the RI Statewide Planning provided the above overview and update on committee activities.
- Bays, Rivers, & Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) – Veronica Berounsky:**  
Dr. Berounsky reported on the status of the BRWCT grant proposal being re-submitted to the BRWCT for their next meeting in June.

5. **News of activities in Local Watershed Councils:**

Salt Ponds Coalition reported by Ms. Torello:

Water quality monitoring is underway. Board member Ted Callender has been studying the relationship between bottom sediments and nitrates in the water column.

Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone by Ms. Hadley:

The BRWC/FOB has been out in the watershed building capacity and doing educational outreach to promote the importance of watersheds in local schools.

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association by Walt Galloway:

Water quality monitoring is underway.

Ten Mile River Watershed:

Mr. Horbert has been in contact with Ben Cote of the Ten Mile River Watershed who has expressed interest in applying for designation with the RIRC. More information will be provided at the next meetings.

6. **Committee Reports:** None

7. **Officer Reports:**

Treasurer: Ms. McGreavy distributed the monthly financial report.

8. **Other Business:** None

9. **Chair's Report:**

Dr. Berounsky noted that the RIRC plans to participate in the following upcoming events:

July 12<sup>th</sup> Narragansett Environmental Awareness Day

July 6-13 Paddle Across Rhode Island – The first attempt by a trio of experienced canoeists to paddle north to south across the state of Rhode Island using primarily an inland route. For more information, see the event's Facebook page or article in [www.exploreri.com](http://www.exploreri.com).

Alternative RIRC meeting dates and times were discussed. More information to follow.

10. **Adjournment:** There being no further business, Ms. Hadley moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Cole. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.